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Montevideo 1546

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INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07 L-04 NSAE-00
NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 SSO-00 AID-28
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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8019
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY RIO DE JANEIRO
AMEMBASSY BRAZILIA
CINCSO

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CINCSO FOR POLAD

SUBJ: MITRIONE KIDNAPPING

1. THIS AFTERNOON I HELD A FORTY-MINUTE DEEP BACKGROUND (I.E. NOT ATTRIBUTABLE TO EMBASSY SOURCE) PRESS BRIEFING FOR DAVE BELKNAP OF THE LOS ANGELES TIMES, STEWART KELLERMAN, UP, AND ERNEST MCCRARY, CBS, THREE AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS IN MONTEVIDEO COVERING MITRIONE KIDNAPPING.

2. I OPENED THE BRIEFING BY EXPLAINING THAT MY NOT HAVING BEEN MORE COMMUNICATIVE WITH THE PRESS WAS BECAUSE I DID NOT WANT ANYTHING PUBLISHED THAT COULD IN ANY WAY PREJUDICE MITRIONE'S ALREADY DELICATE SITUATION. THEY RESPONDED SAYING THAT THEY UNDERSTOOD THE EXTREME DELICACY OF THE SITUATION AND WOULD APPRECIATE ANYTHING I COULD TELL THEM.

(2) 3. ANSWERING A QUESTION ON THE NATURE OF MITRIONE'S WOUND I DESCRIBED WHAT I UNDERSTOOD TO BE THE PATH OF THE PROJECTILE AND THE DAMAGE INFLICTED BASED ON DR. STANHAM'S INTERPRETATION OF THE MEDICAL LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE KIDNAPPERS' COMMUNIQUE NUMBER THREE.

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4. ASKED IF I WERE SATISFIED THAT MITRIONE WAS OUT OF DANGER FROM THE WOUND, I INDICATED THAT I COULD ONLY BE GUIDED BY HIS NOTE IN WHICH HE SAID HE IS "RECUPERATING."

5. REGARDING MY CONTACTS WITH THE GOU I STATED THAT I HAD TALKED TO THE FONMIN SEVERAL TIMES AND WITH PRESIDENT PACHECO AND THAT WE IN EMBASSY ARE IN CONSTANT TOUCH WITH THE GOU AT ALL LEVELS. I TOLD THEM I HAD EXPRESSED OUR DEEP CONCERN OVER THE KIDNAPPING AND ESPECIALLY OVER MITRIONE'S HEALTH IN VIEW OF THE REPORTED WOUND. URUGUAYAN OFFICIALS HAD ALL, I SAID, EXPRESSED THEIR SOLIDARITY WITH US AND ASSURED ME THE GOU WOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO SECURE MITRIONE'S SAFE RETURN. I MENTIONED ALSO THAT PRESIDENT PACHECO HAD SENT A CABLE MESSAGE OF SIMILAR CONTENT TO PRESIDENT NIXON.

6. WHEN ASKED IF I WERE SATISFIED WITH GOU EFFORTS TO LOCATE MITRIONE AND EFFECT RELEASE, I INDICATED THAT ASFAR AS I KNOW EVERYTHING POSSIBLE WAS BEING DONE. WHEN PRESSED FOR DETAILS I WENT OFF THE RECORD AND STATED THAT AS THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTION IN THE KIDNAPPING WAS THE GOU'S I WAS NATURALLY NOT PRIVY TO DETAILS OF ACTIONS BEING UNDERTAKEN.

7. BELKNAP STATED THAT HE THOUGHT THE 10-POINT DECLARATION OF MINISTER OF INTERIOR FRANCESE WAS VERY STRONG. I AGREED. HE SUGGESTED THIS MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS OUTRIGHT REJECTION OF NEGOTIATION AND ASKED MY OPINION. I WENT OFF THE RECORD AND SAID INTERPRETATION OF NOTE NOT EASY BUT I DID NOT THINK THAT ALL DOORS WERE CLOSED.

8. BELKNAP STATED THAT THERE HAD BEEN CONSIDERABLE RESISTANCE ON THE PART OF MITRIONE, JONES AND ROSENFELD TO THE KIDNAPPERS AND INQUIRED WHETHER THE DEPARTMENT HAD ISSUED INSTRUCTIONS ENCOURAGING THIS TYPE OF RESISTANCE. I REPLIED IN THE NEGATIVE SAYING THAT PRECISE INSTRUCTIONS TO COVER EVERY SITUATION WOULD CLEARLY BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT.

9. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION BY KELLERMAN ABOUT ADDITIONAL SECURITY MEASURES FOR EMBASSY PERSONNEL I REPLIED THAT OUR EMBASSIES WORLD-WIDE WERE ON THE ALERT AND THAT SUCH INSTANCES CONSTITUTED AN OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD. I SAID WE WERE ALL WELL AWARE OF THE NEED FOR SECURITY MEASURES AND OF COURSE HAD THEM IN EFFECT BEFORE THIS OCCURRENCE. SINCE THE KIDNAPPING, WE HAD HELD A NUMBER OF MEETINGS TO FIND POSSIBLE

MEANS OF STRENGTHENING THOSE MEASURES.

10. ASKED IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY CONTACT WITH THE KIDNAPPERS OTHER THAN THE PUBLISHED NOTES, I RESPONDED NONE THAT I WAS AWARE OF.

11. ALL THREE CORRESPONDENTS PRESSED FOR AN INTERVIEW WITH GORDON JONES BUT I DECLINED BASING MY REFUSAL ON POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS FROM PUBLISHED ARTICLES WHICH MIGHT FURTHER IMPERIL MITRIONE. OFF THE RECORD I TOLD THEM THAT I WAS RECOMMENDING JONES FOR EARLY HOME LEAVE SINCE IT WAS ABOUT DUE AND THIS WOULD GIVE HIM AND HIS FAMILY A CHANCE TO REST FROM THE EXPERIENCE. WHEN ASKED TO BE SURE AND LET THEM KNOW WHEN HE WAS LEAVING I SAID "I'LL KEEP IT IN MIND."
ADAIR

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